

U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Special Counsel
for Immigration-Related
Unfair Employment Practices



**You Have The Right To Work.
Don't Let Anyone Take It Away.**



Real Life Stories That Can Help You

The United States can be a land of opportunity. Unfortunately, it can also be a very frustrating place. As you go about looking for work, you may meet employers who do not understand the laws. Whether they do it purposely or not, they discriminate. They may not hire you because they think you are not authorized to work or because of your national origin, appearance, or accent.

This booklet will tell the stories of two people. These individuals applied for jobs and were turned away. Each had the right to work in the United States but was discriminated against by employers who demanded documents that they had no right to ask for.

But most importantly, these people stood up for themselves. They knew they had a right to work in the United States and they talked to the people who could help them. You can too.

Read their stories. If you have been discriminated against in this way, take action. Follow the hotline instructions in this booklet. The law is on your side. But before it can do anything to help, you must ask for help.

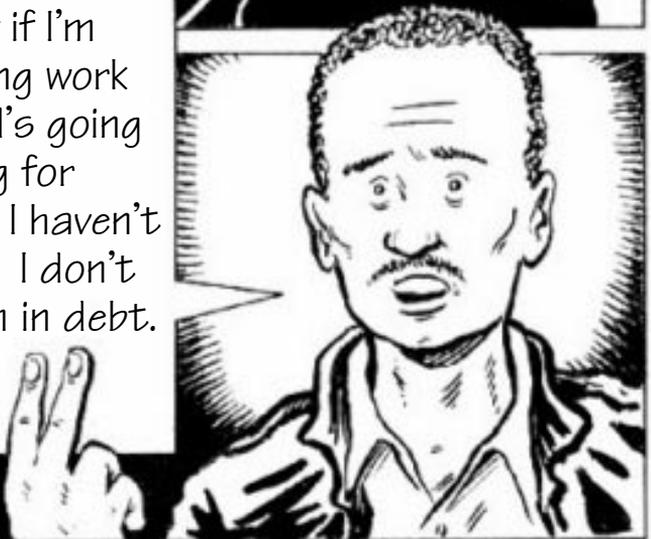
What's wrong Felipe?
Why the long face?

Sorry to bother you,
Julia, but I'm having
problems finding work,
and since I know
that you have experience
in these things, I wanted
to talk to you.

Sure! What's
going on?



You see, I don't know if I'm
having bad luck finding work
or if something weird's going
on. I've been applying for
work everywhere, but I haven't
been hired anywhere. I don't
know what to do. I'm in debt.
I haven't paid my
rent in two months.



Calm down, Felipe! Tell me exactly what happened. Why didn't anybody hire you?

I don't know. They wouldn't even tell me. I think it's because I don't have a green card. I have a temporary work permit.



OFFICE

PERSONNEL

Hotel S



That doesn't matter. You're authorized to work. Why didn't they accept your papers?

Well, I don't know. At my last job interview at a hotel, the head of personnel took me aside and said he was very sorry but they couldn't hire people whose papers weren't "in order."



But you have a work permit, and your papers are in order.



That's right. I wanted to tell him the same thing, but my English isn't very good. I couldn't explain about my papers very well. Besides, the man didn't even want to listen to me.



Oh Julia! I don't know what I'm going to do!

Don't worry Felipe, everything will be okay. But you can't give up. Remember when they fired me and Matilde from the plant because we weren't citizens and we didn't speak English?

Yeah, but that was different.

No! It was almost the same thing!



Remember, we worked at that plant.

What English did we need to pack apples? That's why Matilde and I decided to organize a group of co-workers to talk to the bosses.



We demanded to speak with the manager. His assistant finally had to listen to us. The manager told us to stop fighting, that if we continued making trouble he'd fire us. He said we should be grateful to have work even though we weren't citizens.





Some of my co-workers were afraid of losing their jobs. That's why they didn't want to go on pushing. Matilde and I were the only ones who defended our right to work. I knew we'd win the case because Claudia, a social worker at my children's school, told me about an office in Washington, D.C. The office helps people like us who are authorized to work but are discriminated against. And they help for free.

I decided not to be scared or embarrassed so I called. I spoke to a lawyer from the Department of Justice who actually spoke Spanish. That same day the lawyer began to help us.



The lawyer called the bosses at the plant and told them that it's against the law to fire or turn away workers because they're not U.S. citizens. He also explained to them that it's illegal to deny work to qualified people who have work permits, or who speak English with an accent.



So the plant had to give me and Matilde our jobs back. And we got paid for the time we were unemployed after we were fired.



But afterward, didn't your bosses give you a hard time?

No, they couldn't. They knew we had lawyers who would help us.



Julia, can you give me the number for that office at the Department of Justice?



Of course I can Felipe! When you call, ask them to connect you with someone who speaks Spanish. The number is 1-800-255-7688. Here's the phone. The call is free!

Days Later...

Julia, I called the number you gave me and spoke with a lawyer in Spanish. She agreed that my papers were in order and called the hotel where I had been turned down. She told them that they had to give me the job. She explained to them that the green card was only one of several documents that prove work authorization and identity and that to deny someone a job who is authorized to work may be discrimination.



And what did the hotel say?

Once they understood that the papers I had shown them initially were valid, they agreed to give me the job. I started last week.

That's wonderful! See how everything worked out? The only way to end job discrimination is by standing up for our rights.



Yes, you were right. If it hadn't been for your advice and the telephone number to get help from the Office of Special Counsel in Washington, I'd still be without a job. I really appreciate your help, Julia. I learned how to defend my rights.

If You Have Also Been Discriminated
Against Because Of Your National
Origin Or Your Immigration Status, Call
THIS Hotline Number For Help:



1-800-255-7688

TDD for hearing impaired:

1-800-237-2515

In the Washington, D.C. area,
call (202) 616-5594

TDD for hearing impaired:

(202) 616-5525

Office of Special Counsel for
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Employment Practices (OSC)

or write to OSC at:

U.S. Department of Justice

P.O. Box 27728

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